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SUBJECT: STRONG ELECTION OBSERVATION EFFORT TO ASSESS
YEMEN'S ELECTION

REF: A. SANAA 818

[1](#)B. SANAA 706

[1](#)1. Summary: Yemen's parliamentary election April 27 (refs and septel) will benefit from a well-organized election observation effort that will assess its outcome. Encouraged by the ROYG, political parties and NGOs, more than 30,000 international and domestic observers will deploy on election day. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) will field the only official international delegation and plans to issue a statement on April 29. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) In an event striking for its contrast with some other country leaders who discourage or disallow independent election observation, President Saleh hosted a televised event for all international observers at the Presidential compound on April 23. President Saleh welcomed the observers and said that Yemen has "attempted to learn from other democratic experiments" and has worked hard to improve election administration. He described efforts to ensure a peaceful election and said that Yemen is committed to democratic development. When challenged about the disappointing number of women candidates running for election, he encouraged all voters to elect women and admitted that Yemen had to work harder on women's inclusion in political life while noting the difficulties involved culturally in doing so. One National Democratic Institute (NDI) observer told Pol/Econoff that she was "pleasantly surprised" to get such a welcome after her observation experience in Zimbabwe, noting that NDI, UNDP and IFES had characterized the cooperation between internationals and the ROYG during the election process to her as "constructive and close" despite some difficulties.

[1](#)3. (U) The 30-member international delegation from NDI arrived in Yemen April 22. Members from 10 countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Turkey, comprise the NDI delegation, which includes members of parliament, academics, NGO and political party activists, journalists and former diplomats (including former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Charles Dunbar). Because of funding constraints and security concerns, neither the UN nor the EU was able to mount official observation efforts, making NDI, the only official international delegation. NDI plans to issue its statement on the election on April 29.

[1](#)4. (U) The NDI delegation will be joined by more informal efforts by various embassies, including the U.S. Post will deploy more than 20 observers to constituencies in Sanaa, Aden and Hadramaut but plans to keep a low profile, both for security reasons and to ensure the multi-country NDI delegation remains at the forefront. Post has closely coordinated within the Embassy and with NDI to ensure appropriate security coverage for the observers by the ROYG.

[1](#)5. (U) More than 30,000 domestic observers representing NGOs, political parties and other actors have obtained credentials to examine the election process. Of these, 6-10,000 are from non-partisan and experienced NGOs trained by NDI, which should add valuable analysis to NDI's official statement.

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